



Melvin W. Russell
Senior Executive Service
Acting Director, Defense Media Activity

Melvin W. Russell was appointed as the Acting Director of the Defense Media Activity (DMA), a Department of Defense Field Activity, in October, 2009. He leads a worldwide media organization reporting to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. DMA employs state-of-the-art and emerging media technologies in the production and distribution of a broad range of products and services that are essential to meeting the ever-changing information requirements of the Defense Department's civilian and military leaders, current and former U.S. military service members, their families, and external audiences. DMA consists of 2,400 active duty military, civilian, and contract personnel assigned to eight locations in the United States and at 33 permanent overseas sites.

Commissioned in the U.S. Army through the ROTC program in 1961, Mr. Russell served more than 22 years as a Signal Corps officer. His early career included assignments at Fort Hood, Texas; Naples, Italy; and Hue, South Vietnam. In 1968 he was selected to attend the University of Texas, receiving a Master's Degree in Television and Film Production. He was then assigned to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he spent the next three years in charge of the television, film, and radio facilities.

In 1973, Mr. Russell was selected for an exchange program with the British Army. He served the next two years in charge of the engineering department of the Royal Signals School, establishing the first television facility at the school. He was next assigned to the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. where he served as a senior staff officer responsible for Army audio visual activities. In 1977, he was selected to command the U.S. Army Audio Visual Activity in the Pentagon and continued commanding USAAVA for almost five years.

In 1981, Mr. Russell became the Assistant Director of the American Forces Radio and Television Service. He served in this position until his military retirement in 1983. After his retirement he became the operations manager for D-K Associates, an audio-visual firm in Rockville, Maryland.

In 1984, Mr. Russell was offered the opportunity to return to the Department of Defense, this time as a civilian, and became the Director of AFRTS. He served as the senior manager of the worldwide organization responsible for providing American radio and television service to the military in 177 countries, overseeing its growth from a single channel, over-the-air system into a multi-channel, satellite-delivered network.

In October 2008, he was assigned as the Director, Defense Media Activity Alexandria, the follow-on organization to the American Forces Information Service. He served as the senior manager of Department of Defense visual information, web, print, new media and broadcasting operations to include his continued responsibilities as the Director of AFRTS.

Mr. Russell attended Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Texas and received a B.S. Degree in Chemistry and Secondary Education in 1961. He received an M.A. Degree from the University of Texas in 1970.